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DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EAP/RSP/TC, EAP/PA, EAP/PD -  
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TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [TW](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: TAIWAN'S LEGISLATIVE ELECTION

A) "Politics [Should] Return to Basics"

Professor Chu Yun-han of National Taiwan University's Department of Political Science said in the centrist, pro-status quo "China Times" (12/13);

"The spokesperson of the U.S. State Department said 'the United States salutes the people of Taiwan' immediately after the outcome of [Saturday's] legislative elections was revealed, and one can easily see [Washington's] excitement behind that statement. The outcome of the elections, to a certain extent, has excluded the possibility of 'overall rule' by the DPP government headed by President Chen Shui-bian for the next three years. It has also significantly cut back on the room the Pan-Green alliance has for political operations intended to promote 'a referendum on the new constitution' and 'the name changes [plan] for Taiwan.' As far as Washington is concerned, the outcome of the elections is equivalent to the de-fusing of a bomb by the majority of Taiwan voters -- [a bomb] which might finally have triggered a military showdown between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait. Also, for the time being, it has saved the United States from having to take the trouble to impose serious measures that might jeopardize Taiwan in order to de-fuse the bomb by itself. Moreover, the outcome of the elections has offered the United States a special warrant based on 'respect for the majority opinion in Taiwan' to monitor Chen's [words and behaviors] in the future. .

"Compared with the March presidential election, nearly 3.5 million voters [chose to be] absent from Saturday's legislative elections because they are disinclined to [get involved in] politics and they are disappointed with Taiwan's future political direction. . The majority of voters chose to let the Pan-Blue alliance retain the majority of [seats in] the Legislative Yuan [as a way] of buying themselves a package of comprehensive insurance. They hoped to rule out the risk of intensified conflict across the Taiwan Strait that might be caused by the DPP [controlling both the Presidential Office and Legislative Yuan]. They also wanted to rule out the risk of accelerating corruption, abuses of power, and violation of laws - a natural consequence resulting from the defeat of the Pan-Blue alliance as the DPP would become dominant as the ruling party. They hoped to keep the development of Taiwan's future political situation open so that the legislative elections in 2007 and the presidential election in 2008 will remain an undetermined chess game for both the Pan-Blue and Pan-Green alliances.

"Those roughly 2.2 million voters who supported President Chen with regard to his re-election half a year ago did not come out to vote or even chose to vote for Pan-Blue alliance candidates or independent candidates this time. This means that the issues that Chen focused on during the [presidential election] campaign failed to meet their expectations as priority policies that Chen should deal with in his second term of office. . But Chen's administration still tried to use the illusionary 'national identity' issue. . [This strategy] simply failed to work this time.

"Public opinion revealed by the outcome of Saturday's legislative elections contains significant revelations for future leaders of both the Pan-Blue and Pan-Green alliances. For the future leaders of the Pan-Green camp, Saturday's election results have proved that the political power of the Pan-Green camp has not grown as fast as expected. . Whether the DPP should choose the middle-of-the road approach again will definitely become the focus of arguments within the party. The most important revelation of Saturday's elections is that ... it takes real political achievements to expand the political power [of a political party] and [a political party] cannot rely on political schemes and flair. ."

B) "Make a Choice between the Pan-Blue Alliance's

Completing Legislation for a Referendum on Taiwan  
Independence and the DPP's Abolishing Its Party  
Platform on Taiwan Independence"

The conservative, pro-unification "United Daily News"  
editorialized (12/13):

"The Pan-Blue alliance has secured a majority of seats  
in the Legislative Yuan [following Saturday's  
legislative election]. The first task that the new  
legislature, which will start operating next spring,  
should do is to pass legislation and make the  
referendum on Taiwan independence' a legal mechanism. .

"Objectively speaking, the Pan-Blue alliance's reserved  
attitude toward the referendum on Taiwan independence  
and the United States' attempts to restrain such a  
referendum are both a result of their good intentions,  
hoping that the DPP will not put itself in an  
unfavorable position. President Chen, however,  
distorted and took advantage of these good intentions,  
which in the end have become an amulet for Chen to  
manipulate the Taiwan independence issue  
unscrupulously. .

". In other words, both the United States and the Pan-  
Blue alliance hope to hold back the holding of a  
referendum on Taiwan independence, but instead, they  
have been held hostages by the Taiwan independence  
issue. .

"To change this situation, the first thing [the new  
legislature] should do is to complete legislation for  
holding a referendum on Taiwan independence. The only  
resolution [to such a dispute] is to return the right  
to decide whether Taiwan should declare independence  
back to the Taiwan people. If the majority of Taiwan  
people decide that Taiwan should declare independence,  
then we should move ahead [toward such a goal] in full  
gear; if not, then the President should no longer  
trample upon the constitutional rule. .

C) "Taipei-Washington Ties in the Aftermath of the  
Legislative Election: the United States [Had Better]  
Talk Less"

Lin Cheng-yi, Research Fellow at the Institute of  
International Relations, National Chengchi University,  
said in an op-ed piece in the conservative, pro-  
unification "United Daily News" (12/12):

". Perhaps the Bush administration may think that since  
the Pan-Blue alliance won the majority of seats in the  
Legislative Yuan, the movements to push for Taiwan's  
constitutional reform and name changes will face more  
obstacles, thus reducing the opportunities for the Chen  
Shui-bian administration to provoke Beijing. But  
Washington should also review its inconsistent position  
toward Taiwan's democratic development.

"[The United States] used to use its arms sales to  
Taiwan as a means to pressure the KMT to lift martial  
law, and now it is citing security as a reason to  
pressure the DPP to restrain its political reforms.  
Washington's way of handling the Taiwan referendum  
issue seems to fall into a predicament along the lines  
of '[We] don't like it but [we] cannot stop it.' . The  
Bush administration now tends to make a more public and  
more immediate response when reacting to unfavorable  
behavior from Taipei, leaving the latter no room for  
imagination. Given the [fact that the] Pan-Blue  
alliance won the majority in the Legislative Yuan, the  
United States may have less chance to make such  
hegemonic responses."

D) "More Work Needs to Be Done"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times"  
noted in an editorial (12/13):

. "The election is being interpreted everywhere as a  
rejection of Taiwan separatism. Certainly there was a  
sense that themes from Chen's campaigning would, if  
realized, raise tensions with China. But there was  
also a wide realization that many of these would be  
impossible to attain, given that the pan-greens would  
never win the super-majority needed to make  
constitutional changes on their own. So there was a  
strange hollowness about the DPP's Chen-centered  
campaign, an emptiness that resulted in some 2.25  
million who voted green in March - a third of the total  
votes for Chen - not showing up at the polls Saturday.

"But while voters might have balked at the risky road  
the DPP seemed to be taking, Taiwan consciousness is  
not going to go away. Remember it was the strongly pro-

reunification People First Party that was the big loser in the election, seeing a quarter of its seats go to the more moderate Chinese Nationalist Party. ."

PAAL